

VA**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420
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www.va.govFOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 26, 2017

Statement From Secretary Shulkin on Agreement Reached on Funding to Increase Veterans Access to Health Care and Strengthen VA Workforce

WASHINGTON — On behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the nation's Veterans, I want to commend the leadership of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees on their agreement on legislation that will greatly benefit Veterans.

Recently, I notified the committees of an issue that arose from Veterans' increased use of the Veterans Choice program. Because of this surge in usage, VA needs replenishment of Veterans Choice funding earlier than expected.

The Committees have responded to this urgent need. In a truly bipartisan way, they have put together legislation that provides \$2.1 billion to avoid a disruption in the Veterans Choice program and strengthens VA's internal capacity by authorizing 28 major medical leases.

This will allow VA to bring new facilities closer to where Veterans live, and those facilities will bring increased convenience and access to VA health care.

The Committees included measures that will improve VA's most valuable asset – its employees. The legislation will make it easier to hire the most sought after medical specialists, as well as establish innovative human resources programs to strengthen workforce management.

I urge the House of Representatives to act swiftly, so this legislation can be considered in the Senate before the August recess begins.

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